



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
TOURISM ADVISORY TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

**Arizona State University SkySong
Global Conference Room: 201
1475 North Scottsdale Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85257
APPROVED MINUTES**

- PRESENT:** John Holdsworth
Cory Baker (left at 12:07 p.m.)
Kathy Duley
Richard Hayslip
Taryl O'Shea
Fred Unger
Matthew Wright (left at 11:25 a.m.)
- ABSENT:** Kate Birchler
- STAFF:** Steve Geiogamah
Holli Shannon
Paul Katsenes
Gary Meyer
Ben Moriarty
Rose Rimsnider
Susan Conklu
Rachel Smetana
- GUESTS:** Ace Bailey, TDC
Sonnie Kirtley, Coalition of Greater Scottsdale
Valeri LeBlanc, PLACES Consulting
Neal Pearle, Cultural Council
Steve Olmstead, Transportation Commission
Rachel Pearson, SCVB
Susan Morrow Potje
Rachel Sacco, SCVB
Sandy Schenkat

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Noting the presence of a quorum, Chairman Holdsworth called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Tourism Advisory Task Force to order at 9:08 a.m.

2. Public Comment

Sonnie Kirtley said she has watched the Civic Center go through many transformations over the last 47 years. The proposed Civic Center Mall Renovation Project may be a good upgrade to the existing infrastructure, however, the effort will be largely wasted if people cannot find it. As currently configured, it is the best kept secret in town. Visitors and residents rarely make it past the Scottsdale Historical Museum because all appearances lead them to believe the plaza ends there. Renovation plans will be incomplete unless it includes better visibility into the space from the west and the south. The name should be changed to simply the Civic Center, as the word "mall" suggests to visitors that it is a shopping center.

Ms. Kirtley said the renovation should include maps at all entrances to indicate where key buildings, venues, and public art are located. Signage has been studied and changed multiple times, but still does not serve the basic purpose of helping people locate anything. Welcome signs should be available in multiple languages to make visitors feel comfortable. The most common languages spoken by visitors are German, Japanese, Spanish and French. The current green lawns, trees and fountains should be retained because they provide cooling on hot days. Desert rocks and hardscape will radiate heat. An earlier renovation called for the complete removal of all mature trees, which shocked long-time residents. She said the Coalition of Greater Scottsdale fully supports using funds to renovate the Civic Center, but they should be used wisely, and not just focused on the narrow aspect of facilitating event staging.

3. Approval of Minutes

TASK FORCE MEMBER HAYSLIP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2014 REGULAR MEETING AS PRESENTED. TASK FORCE MEMBER UNGER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). TASK FORCE MEMBER BIRCHLER WAS ABSENT.

4. Tourism Task Force Appointment

Chairman Holdsworth stated that two members of the alternate group approved by City Council are available to be appointed to the Task Force pursuant to the bylaws: Susan Morrow Potje and Andrew Chippindall.

Chairman Holdsworth reported that Gabrielle Enriquez's resignation leaves open the Chair of the Generational Change Subcommittee, which Andrew Chippindall has agreed to take over. Craig Jackson will no longer be able to continue offering his full time services to the Task Force, but has agreed to remain available to provide input on items regarding his specific area of expertise.

TASK FORCE MEMBER BAKER MOVED TO APPOINT THE DESIGNATED ALTERNATES TO BECOME PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE. TASK FORCE MEMBER UNGER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). TASK FORCE MEMBER BIRCHLER WAS ABSENT.

5. Tourism Task Force Alternate Recommendations

Mr. Geiogamah noted that the list of alternates has to be refilled. He invited Task Force Members to submit the names of potential candidates. Ideally, five names will be presented to City Council for their approval on March 8, and the Task Force will subsequently vote to add one of them. He said the Task Force currently lacks representation from millennials and hoteliers. Valeri LeBlanc reminded the Task Force that alternates generally are expected to contribute to activities even if they are not officially appointed.

6. Civic Center Mall Renovation Project

Mr. Geiogamah said the purpose of the Civic Center Mall Renovation Project is to enhance the mall infrastructure, create a center for community activity, and provide an event-ready venue that will allow the destination to be competitive in attracting large scale tourism-driven events. The first stage is the development of a design review plan. Goals for this stage include permanent staging and equipment, increased storage facility, low-maintenance landscaping, improved event signage and wayfinding, and enhanced lighting and power sources.

Gary Meyer, Project Manager, provided a timeline for the project. The area in question for this stage is focused only on the green space. City Council will review the funding proposal on January 13. By using on-call architect Holly Street Studios the City will save the time of having to go through the RFQ and proposal process. The community outreach effort will take about four months. Based on feedback, the plan will be refined into a design concept report that will be used to create a municipal use master site plan. City Council will eventually be asked to approve a master plan. Construction documents will be created and the project sent out for bids and permitting. Construction itself should take six months. There are some issues with existing infrastructure that have to be resolved.

In response to an inquiry from Chairman Holdsworth, Mr. Meyer explained that the City has approved contracts with on-call architects and engineers for projects such as this. This arrangement reduces the project timeline by three to four months. Projects can use the process whenever the City Engineer determines that they have met specific requirements. Chairperson Holdsworth requested a copy of the requirements needed for a project to qualify. He said the TATF has long been frustrated with the time it takes to get things done, and would welcome any acceleration of the process. Task Force Member Baker said this project is intended to begin the process of transforming the Civic Center Mall in the immediate future, but it will not be enough on its own. Any changes made at this stage should be incorporated into a larger project later on.

Mr. Geiogamah said the tourism industry is well represented in the process. The Tourism Development Commission has recommended up to \$300,000 for the design review plan and allocated \$600,000 on an annual basis for debt service of up to \$7 million, which has yet to be approved by City Council.

Task Force Member Wright inquired whether this project fits into the existing five-year strategic plan. Ms. LeBlanc responded that it does. WestWorld provides a great venue for the north of the city, but downtown lacks an equivalent venue that could serve the same type of gated purpose. Scottsdale needs a platform from which to attract more event producers. Competing destinations offer easy solutions with infrastructure already in place. The money invested in building this should result in more events coming to Scottsdale, as it will become a much less expensive proposition to hold an event here. The Equidome changed the economics of having an event at WestWorld, because producers no longer had to build temporary supporting infrastructure every time they went there. The same will be true of this project for the Civic Center.

Task Force Member Unger said the existing parking structure is getting old, and a new event venue will need even more parking. The lack of adequate parking will hurt events and downtown merchants. Mr. Meyer said new parking would require a separate capital project that the City lacks the funding for at this time. A bond would be necessary. Task Force Member Unger said the funding for a new parking facility should be part of the conversation from the beginning, since it will be crucial to the success of the project. Chairman Holdsworth agreed that any downtown venue has to address parking issues. Additionally, the existing structure blocks views into the plaza and is part of the reason the core of the city goes unnoticed by so many visitors.

Ms. LeBlanc said it is important to understand that all of the decisions made about downtown Scottsdale interact with each other. The lack of an active place downtown means the city will lose the sense of an urban experience that is critical to drawing younger generations. Downtown merchants will not be as successful as they could be, and it will be difficult to envision how the city could grow. Activities create an urban environment and visitors are a strong part of that. Intersecting issues have to be managed if this is to occur. Parking is related to walkability and alternative modes of transportation. Chairperson Holdsworth said part of the problem has been that issues were addressed in isolation, but Scottsdale can no longer afford that luxury anymore since there is so little space available downtown. The Task Force has to continue reminding people to consider the big picture.

Task Force Member Duley agreed with the public comments that the two main problems with the Civic Center are its name and its lack of visibility. Task Force Member Unger emphasized that keeping the grass and the open space will be crucial to maintaining a pleasant environment there. Residents too enjoy the green space when there are no events.

Ms. LeBlanc said that instead of focusing just on the parking shortage, this problem should be recognized as a part of a whole that incorporates related components such as walkability, attractiveness, and transportation. Mr. Olmstead, Chair of the Transportation Commission, responded that staff is already experimenting with different traffic dynamics models, and one case study will explore the impacts of Super Bowl on downtown.

7. Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) – Tourism Plan Update

Ms. Sacco reported that considerable thought has been going into the features that will make Arizona Central a success. All parties agree that creating a gathering place in downtown is really important. Ideally it will serve as a place for visitors to get information that might impact what they do with their remaining free time. Ten tour operators from eight companies were asked to share their ideas. They felt it would be important for people to learn more about the options available to them. They were candid in saying that most tourists plan their trips online in advance, and it is less common for them to show up looking for something to do and for an operator to be able to fulfill that on short notice. They loved the idea of having a place where operators could stage tours or where people could get ideas for their next trip. Another meeting of the group is planned for the near future. Everyone involved agrees that Arizona Central is a great idea.

Ms. Sacco said the SCVB communication team is always looking for interesting stories about the people or experiences in Scottsdale that can be used in promoting the destination in various media outlets. The group meeting market strategy is exploring ways to better promote the medical tourism opportunities that already exist here. A future familiarization program will incorporate an accreditation series for healthcare and medical meeting planners, similar to one that was done previously for the pharmaceutical industry. The SCVB has worked with various community partners, including the Tourism Development Commission, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission, and Tonto National Forest, to find a solution that will keep the desert jeep tour activity in Scottsdale.

Stories on Scottsdale's culinary offerings have been appearing with greater frequency, connecting some great local experiences to the world. The SCVB has been trying to leverage Scottsdale's spas and auto auctions the same way golf has been leveraged. Travel writers are brought in to experience these assets collectively. The SCVB staff is represented on many of the TATF committees, and is sharing their expertise.

Ms. LeBlanc said the tourism industry is in transition from serving the business market to serving a fully independent leisure market. The tour business is critical to the urban experience and a fully leisure downtown. It is good to hear that tour operators are confident in the concept. A staffed visitor center is a good start, but it is important to make Arizona Central a must-see experience that will generate new traffic. It should create urbanity, a shared experience and excitement of place, as well as provide the opportunity for people to start envisioning what they want to do, where they want to go, and to start planning their next trip. The tour industry still relies on printed brochures because it provides people with an easy way to survey all their options at once. There should be an electronic option as well.

8. Tourism Development and Marketing Strategic Plan – Year 2 Engagement Plans

Chairperson Holdsworth noted that Task Force Members were asked to complete a survey on the effectiveness of the working groups. Ms. LeBlanc reported that the results were both positive and negative. She identified the strong need to connect action items with strategies. No working group feels they are making really good progress, and many

felt little or no progress was being made. Task Force Member Unger argued that the Festivals and Events working group has been making tangible progress, considering that City Council will be reviewing one of their presentations on January 13 for a vote. Ms. LeBlanc agreed. She stated that a few people feel passionately involved with their work, but more say they are not. Passion is necessary to create change, and she encouraged those in the latter camp to work with her to find connections to something they care deeply about.

Ms. Leblanc reported that most working groups feel they have a pretty good mix of people, but she felt that it could be better considering the talent available in Scottsdale. The right mix creates an energy that moves things along quickly. Working groups have to take more initiative between meetings, because unlike traditional boards and commissions, once the decisions are made, it is up to Task Force Members to follow through.

Ms. LeBlanc noted that when it comes to expanding the TATF's circle of influence, the survey suggests this could be done by identifying and implementing strategic goals as the process evolves, and not spend so much time on matters that may have become irrelevant.

Ms. LeBlanc said survey participants were asked to share their views on what the Task Force needs to accomplish in order to keep the process going. One suggestion was to develop strong, out-of-the-box projects that build on Scottsdale's existing strengths as a community, and to promote them in authentic ways. The addition of annual goals was viewed as a crucial step. Group leaders are expected to reevaluate their commitments to success and allocate sufficient time to achieve results.

Ms. LeBlanc stated that a goal of the Strategic Plan is to shift Scottsdale from a resorts-oriented focus to a destination-oriented focus. Another component is to create a high energy, animated urban experience that takes place in a small geographic setting. The plan takes an expansive view of attracting more visitors and more business to Scottsdale. She asked the Task Force to review their scope of work and consider their accomplishments so far.

- Arizona Central

Ms. LeBlanc noted that the Task Force has met with tour operators to obtain feedback on the Arizona Central concept. Funding has been allocated to help support this project, and a physical space has been identified. Task Force Member Unger explained that his company owns property along the canal in downtown Scottsdale. A mixed use project is planned for the site, and space is being dedicated to accommodate Arizona Central, the SCVB, and an underground theater. It would be a permanent facility with restrooms and the infrastructure necessary to allow event producers to step in without having to rent temporary equipment. It would be a City asset with a similar revenue arrangement as the one that exists at WestWorld. The space offers a good view of the mountain for television, and is in a high-visibility location that could host gatherings and events.

Ms. LeBlanc clarified that while the Civic Center Mall would be a large green space that can be activated for events, this proposal would create a small to medium size event activation space that would be used frequently, and not always for a gated experience.

Ms. Sacco stated that this proposed space would complement the Civic Center Mall because it would be the kind of place that ESPN would want to use as a backdrop for their broadcasts. There is no other space like it, and it would allow Scottsdale to keep its media presence during mega events. Task Force Member Baker said the space would create an urban experience along the waterfront with constant activity.

The Task Force indicated by consensus that this project was critical to the future of the Task Force's work. Ms. LeBlanc felt that this project is important because it represents an opportunity to attract the visitors who come to Arizona but not to Scottsdale, which is about half of the total. She felt it would serve as a critical tool to help Scottsdale make an instant mark on eight million visitors.

Task Force Unger stated that as a developer, he would not want to presume what is best for the city and drive the process, but would prefer that the City recognize this opportunity to determine what this plaza should look like and make it a reality. Ms. LeBlanc suggested the next steps of discussing the proposal with elected officials and the public.

Chairman Holdsworth noted that the Task Force has \$70,000 available to engage a professional planner to create a design that could encompass Arizona Central, and has the authority to find that designer. Ms. Leblanc clarified that the site would have to be under control before the money could be spent. Mr. Katsenes added that control would mean a purchase, a donation, or a development agreement. Chairman Holdsworth said a development agreement exists today, but it needs to be amended before it can be implemented. Mr. Katsenes said it would be easy to find out what modifications are necessary.

Chairman Holdsworth noted that many downtown projects have been delayed for years for various reasons. There is an opportunity right now to make Arizona Central a reality, but the Task Force has to determine exactly what steps to take to make sure it is implemented before time runs out. His meetings with City Council Members and the City Manager have been positive, but he has not been given clear direction on how to proceed.

Task Force Member Unger explained that ESPN took a tour of various locations in Scottsdale and they want a backdrop of the mountain along the canal bank. They would be happy to help design a facility they could use in perpetuity. He encouraged their involvement, and offered to front the money for the study if it would help expedite the process.

Task Force Member Potje said Arizona Central is where animation should live because it is important in the urban experience. Funding should be made available for street performers who can animate that space.

- Generational Change

Ms. LeBlanc said this is a dynamic group of thinkers who have been charged with planning for the next generation and to develop the tools for reaching them. They are engaged in organizing the general knowledge of Indian Bend Wash, cataloging

environmental accomplishments, establishing a speaker series on environmental issues, and planning a welcome event for new residents. Andrew Chippindall has agreed to take over this group upon Gabrielle Enriquez's resignation. She expressed concern that the group has only met once.

Chairman Holdsworth said the Task Force has done a poor job of supporting this group, and has the obligation to shed light on some of the other initiatives in development. This group's creative thinking can help in all areas. They are bright people from good organizations with many good ideas beyond just generational change. They are impatient though, and if they want to stay engaged, will require action. They want to know what they have to do and when they can start doing it. Ms. LeBlanc said this topic is relevant to everything else the Task Force is doing. As with Arizona Central, the TATF needs to identify a clear goal to work towards right now.

Chairman Holdsworth said the TATF has been accomplishing things, but the problem has come in communicating the accomplishments for the benefit of everyone involved. The Task Force needs to find a vehicle to keep everybody up to date and perhaps nudge some groups into doing more between meetings. The City Council needs more frequent updates to stay engaged with ongoing developments.

Task Force Member Unger said he has met with several City Council Members and is not convinced they all agree that downtown has problems. Without a clear notion of the problems, any solutions presented may not be received very well. The message should be clear that downtown needs these initiatives, and if they do not believe that, the need has to be demonstrated. Chairman Holdsworth disagreed slightly. He felt that while some Council Members may say there are no issues, deep down they know otherwise. The Task Force has to find the right solutions that they can stand behind, for political or other reasons.

- World Class Biking

Ms. LeBlanc reported that the first interpretive bike trip has been delayed by an SRP hurdle but should still be finished soon. The design, content and location of signs are almost ready. A variety of other route ideas are being explored. The City has done a great job of providing infrastructure for bicycles, and these trips serve as a way to animate it. Help is needed from downtown businesses to make bike rentals possible. Visitors could be directed to bike-friendly businesses.

Senior Transportation Planner Ms. Susan Conklu explained that the first route would be a self-guided trip called the Mountain Vista route. In addition to interpretive signs, visitors could rely on a postcard map. At two points along the route, signs will refer to places in the distance. The idea is to encourage people to visit those places later in their stay. The trip will be user-friendly for all different levels of cyclists. Mr. Moriarty said a map of the new route will be printed in the next edition of the Downtown Directory, and it could serve as a template for adding additional routes in the future.

Ms. Conklu said this initiative overlaps with the Transportation Department's bicycle program. Scottsdale's status as a gold level bicycle community is up for renewal this year. The City is adding artistically-designed bike racks near the library and stadium to accommodate events that occur in the area.

The Task Force Member Unger said that on its own, this initiative will not make a big difference, but in conjunction with everything else going on, it makes a great addition. Ms. Leblanc noted that younger generations are attracted to destinations with reputations as bike-friendly communities where they can rent bikes.

- Crisis Response Reserve

Mr. Geiogamah said the Tourism Development Commission is seeking the assistance of the TATF. The City Treasurer has outlined an opportunity to allocate bed tax dollars in a contingency fund, and the TDC has asked the TATF to provide input on how and when the fund would be used. The bed tax contingency would be modeled on the City's General Fund, which reserves a contingency fund of 10%. Ms. LeBlanc noted that while this initiative would not improve tourism in Scottsdale, it could be used to minimize the damage caused by an unexpected turn of events.

- Downtown Dashboard

Ms. LeBlanc said the dashboard will be run as a spreadsheet for the next couple of months to judge what data will be most useful and interesting to people. Two realtors are handling inputs for real estate.

- Tourism Today

Task Force Member Potje said it would be helpful to make City Council aware of how interconnected TATF's strategies are. No single project will get Scottsdale where it has to be, but all of them together can. Additionally, Council should understand that the efforts designed to help downtown will help the community as a whole. Chairman Holdsworth agreed, adding that a community with amenities that can engage visitors creates a vibrancy that benefits all residents, not just visitors. Scottsdale cannot lose the value of all it has accomplished by pretending there are no issues moving forward. The change has to be evolutionary, not revolutionary.

Ms. LeBlanc stated that tourism has outsized benefits as a result of what it brings to the community, including tax receipts, amenities, quality of life, premium identity, premium pricing, premium real estate values, business location preferences, and retirement choices. The same quality that exists in Scottsdale's resorts has to exist downtown. The message has to be that what happens downtown impacts every citizen in Scottsdale, but the focus has to be on tourism to get those benefits.

- Downtown Events & Festival

Ben Moriarty introduced the RFP for the Animation initiative, which has a \$100,000 budget, \$75,000 of which comes from the Task Force, while the remaining \$25,000 comes from the City. Old Town Merchants put on the Cowboy Christmas event this past weekend and reported good results despite the weather. Fifth Avenue is activating Kiva Center and other spaces with entertainers. This new funding will help encourage even more activity in downtown.

Mr. Moriarty said the drafting of the Special Events Ordinance is another effort that will help streamline the process for those wishing to hold special events in Scottsdale. A

permit is needed for any activity in the street or that is not part of the land use. Currently the code is found in the Zoning Ordinance and is tied closely to land use. The new ordinance will be separate from zoning and allow for a more tiered approach depending on the size and type of special event. The changes are designed to help encourage more of these types of activities.

The new ordinance will go through a public hearing process and once it is approved by City Council, the old piece will be removed from the Zoning Ordinance. With the change, event producers will be able to speak directly to the decision makers on the Special Events Committee. Chairperson Holdsworth welcomed the changes, saying Scottsdale has lost multiple events because the current process is cumbersome, difficult, and time-consuming. Task Force Member O'Shea volunteered to review the proposal and provide feedback.

Task Force Member Baker reported that the marketing study that was approved by the Task Force earlier this year will be completed by March or April and deliverables are expected by June. The analysis will focus on major festival events, and will serve as a template of information that could be applied to any major event proposal. The specific deliverable will be a completed business plan for an arts international destination festival. Ms. LeBlanc said this festival would reinforce Scottsdale as a destination, create an urban experience, and attract more visitors. The Task Force saw the festival proposal as being critical to the success of their work.

9. Identification of Future Agenda Items

None.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

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